

The Changing Garden: Four Centuries of European and American Art

Betsy G. Fryberger

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This beautifully illustrated volume examines the garden as an enduring and evolving cultural resource, in two hundred works by more than one hundred artists. Prints, drawings, photographs, and paintings illuminate the changing aesthetics and uses of gardens from sixteenth-century Italian villas and Louis XIV's Versailles to such democratic urban parks as New York City's Central Park and San Francisco's Crissy Field, adapted from a former military base.

Artists' representations of gardens have been organized first to highlight design concepts and individual features, then to focus on historic gardens and parks, and finally to survey the activities within those settings. Among the earliest works included is an engraving of a drawing made in 1570 by Pieter Bruegel the Elder of a garden being vigorously cultivated by many workers. Two centuries later, Giovanni Battista Piranesi and Jean-Honoré Fragonard represented the Villa d'Este at Tivoli in a state of neglected grandeur; Hubert Robert's painting of Méréville depicted a garden he helped design. By 1900 Eugène Atget's photographs of Versailles and Camille Pissarro's paintings of the Tuileries convey the enduring structure of French formal gardens. In contrast, American artists Maurice Prendergast, John Singer Sargent, and James McNeill Whistler depicted the pleasures of social activities in that setting. Photographs by Michael Kenna and Bruce Davidson offer contemporary perspectives on these issues.



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